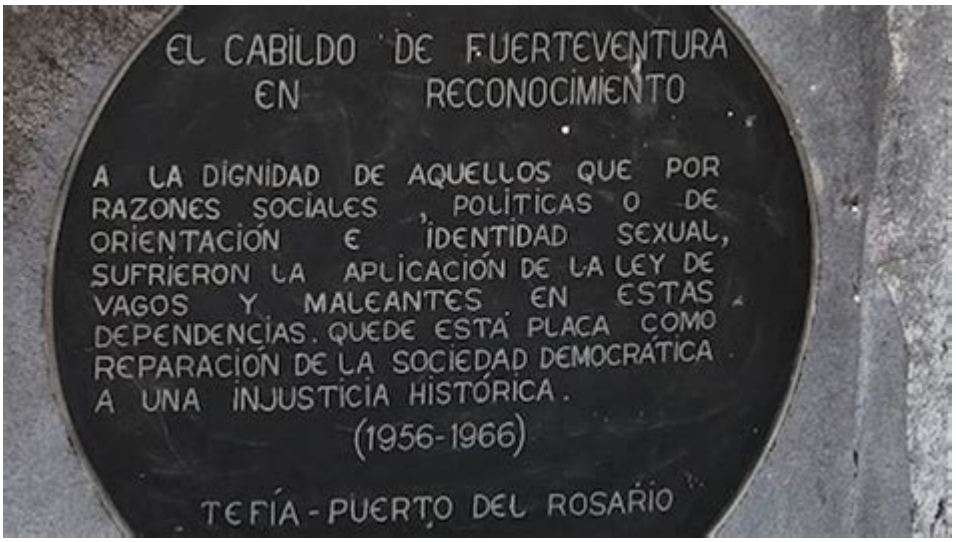
Tefia Camp

In 1953, a Special Court was created in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, to apply security measures to people considered dangerous by virtue of the law of Vagrants and Crooks . This law, approved in 1933, had the objective of rehabilitating people whose behaviour could lead to criminal activity. However, it was frequently used as an instrument of repression and social and political control.
In 1954, a Penitentiary Agricultural Colony was created at the abandoned airport at Tefía to accommodate detainees under this law, which was extended to include imprisonment for one to three years for homosexuality.
Life in the labor camp was hard. Inmates undertook agricultural work, forced labor and military training, and suffered beatings, hunger and constant humiliation. They were made to work to exhaustion and subjected to regular mistreatment by officials using whips and canes. Water was taken from a well by prisoners and stored in jerry cans, and there was no electricity. Inmates slept on the floor of the barracks on straw matresses and during the day carried stones, transported water, dug ditches and broke stones. Food was three-day old bread, noodles with goat meat and peas with rooted sweet potatoes mixed with weevils. Washing was permitted only on Saturdays for a very short period of time, and local residents recalled the inmates being marched to and from church on Sundays.
These harsh conditions led two inmates to compare their treatment to that which the Jews received in the concentration camps Only the gas chambers were missing.
During its existence, the colony accommodated between 300 and 350 men, of whom perhaps 100 were there because of their homosexuality. Some other inmates were incarcerated for purely political reasons.
The colony closed in 1966 due to the low number of inmates, who were transferred to prison in Las Palmas. In 2004 the Cabildo installed a plaque in memory of those who were imprisoned in Tefia, and on 17 May 2008 the Government of the Canary Islands celebrated the International Day against Homophobia, by installing another commemorative stone. Some of the buildings in which the prisoners lived can still be seen.

Un aspecto de la parte posterior de la Colonia Penitenciaria de Tefia (Fuerteventura).


EL CABILDO DE FUERTEVENTURA
EN RECONOCIMIENTO
A LA DIGNIDAD DE AQUELLOS QUE POR RAZONES SOCIALES, POLITICAS O DE ORIENTACIÓN E IDENTIDAD SEXUAL, SUFRIERON LA APLICACIÓN DE LA LEY DE VAGOS Y MALEANTES EN ESTAS DEPENDENCIAS. QUEDE ESTA PLACA COMO REPARACIÓN DE LA SOCIEDAD DEMOCRÁTICA A UNA INJUSTICIA HISTÓRICA.
(1956-1966)
TEFÍA - PUERTO DEL ROSARIO